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RUSSELL SPLANE/MIAMI

ELECTION '76: THE SOUTH
(TAPE INSERTS AVAILABLE IN TAPE LIBRARY)

(EDITORS: THIS IS THE FIFTH IN A SPECIAL SERIES OF REPORTS ON THE AMERICAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN AS SEEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A PARTICULAR LOCALE OR VOTER GROUP.)

ANNCR:

ONE REGION OF THE UNITED STATES IS DRAWING PARTICULAR ATTENTION THIS ELECTION YEAR -- THE SOUTH, WHICH HAS A GOOD CHANCE TO SEND ONE OF ITS NATIVE SONS TO THE WHITE HOUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED YEARS. VOA CORRESPONDENT RUSSELL SPLANE HAS BEEN TRAVELING THROUGH THE SOUTH TO ASSESS ITS MOOD AND THE APPEAL THAT JIMMY CARTER HAS OR DOES NOT HAVE FOR THE SOUTHERN VOTER. HERE'S HIS REPORT FROM MIAMI :

VOICE:

THE U.S. SOUTH.

TO SOME IT'S MAGNOLIAS AND MOCKINGBIRDS. TO OTHERS IT'S BOOMING BUSINESS IN THE NATION'S SUNBELT. BUT TO THE POLITICIAN -- ESPECIALLY IN A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION YEAR -- THE ELEVEN STATES THAT COMPRISE THE ORIGINAL SOUTH REPRESENT ONE HUNDRED THIRTY ELECTORAL VOTES -- NEARLY HALF OF THE TWO HUNDRED SEVENTY NEEDED TO ELECT THE NEXT PRESIDENT. AND THE ONCE SOLIDLY DEMOCRATIC SOUTH-WHICH BEGAN DRIFTING OVER INTO THE REPUBLICAN COLUMN IN THE GOLDWATER PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN IN NINETEEN SIXTY-FOUR AND WENT ALL THE WAY OVER WITH PRESIDENT NIXON IN NINETEEN SEVENTY-TWO -- IS SHOWING SIGNS THIS YEAR OF A GIANT SHIFT BACK TO THE DEMOCRATS. THE CHIEF REASON: DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE JIMMY CARTER OF GEORGIA, THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FROM THE DEEP SOUTH TO BE CHOSEN BY A MAJOR POLITICAL PARTY IN ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-EIGHT YEARS. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THEIR LIVES, SOUTHERN VOTERS SEE

A CHANCE FOR A FELLOW SOUTHERNER TO FIND HIS WAY TO THE WHITE HOUSE. BUT WILL REGIONAL PRIDE IN JIMMY CARTER BE THE ONLY FACTOR IN SHAPING THE IMPORTANT SOUTHERN VOTE? AN ASTUTE OBSERVER OF THE SOUTHERN POLITICAL SCENE HAS SOME THOUGHTS ON THIS. HE'S RAY JENKINS, EDITOR OF THE EDITORIAL PAGE OF THE ALABAMA JOURNAL IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA:

TAPE: CUT ONE -- RAY JENKINS

"THAT IS NOT THE SOLE FACTOR. I THINK HIS PERSONALITY, THE ANTI-WASHINGTON IMAGE THAT HE PROJECTS -- THE THINGS THAT ARE WORKING FOR HIM IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY ARE WORKING FOR HIM HERE AS WELL. THE REGIONAL FACTOR IS KIND OF AN INTERESTING PHENOMENON TO FOLLOW. YOU HAVE TO THINK OF IT IN THE CONTEXT OF SOUTHERN HISTORY. IT'S BEEN OVER A HUNDRED YEARS SINCE A SOUTHERN PRESIDENT HAS BEEN ELECTED. THIS HAS CREATED A CERTAIN SENSE IN THE REGION OF HAVING BEEN RULED OUT OF BOUNDS AS FAR AS PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL POLITICS IS CONCERNED. I THINK IT HAS CREATED A SENSE OF INFERIORITY."

VOICE:

MISTER JENKINS SAYS HE BELIEVES JIMMY CARTER WILL CARRY AT LEAST EIGHT OF THE ELEVEN SOUTHERN STATES -- MAYBE ALL OF THEM -- A BOOST THAT THE ALABAMAN THINKS WILL CARRY MISTER CARTER ALL THE WAY TO THE WHITE HOUSE. BUT IN NEIGHBORING MISSISSIPPI, A PROMINENT REPUBLICAN LEADER HAS A DIFFERENT VIEW. HE'S CLARKE REED, FORMER STATE REPUBLICAN CHAIRMAN AND STILL A REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN FROM MISSISSIPPI:

TAPE: CUT TWO -- CLARKE REED

"WE'RE STILL QUITE PROVINCIAL IN THE SOUTH AND I'M PROUD THAT WE ARE -- BUT NOT SO PROVINCIAL THAT WE'LL VOTE FOR ANYBODY JUST BECAUSE HE HAS A SOUTHERN ACCENT. GEOGRAPHY AND ACCENT IS ABOUT ALL MISTER CARTER HAS IN COMMON WITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE MAJORITY OF THE SOUTHERN PEOPLE. THE THINGS THAT WE HOLD MOST IMPORTANT IN POLITICS ARE, OF COURSE, SOUND FISCAL GOVERNMENTS. MISTER CARTER'S PROPOSALS ARE ALL VERY EXPENSIVE AND PEOPLE ARE BECOMING AWARE OF THAT. IF WE (THE REPUBLICANS) DON'T HOLD AT LEAST HALF THE SOUTH -- OR EVEN MORE -- THEN IN MY OPINION IT'S BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T DONE OUR JOB."

VOICE:

MISTER REED FORESEES A LOW VOTER TURNOUT IN HIS STATE AND OTHERS IN THE SOUTH AND HE SAYS THE RESULT IS ALMOST TOO CLOSE TO

PREDICT. (OPT) IT IS SO CLOSE, HE SAYS, THAT THE ELECTORAL VOTE COULD GO ONE WAY AND THE POPULAR VOTE ANOTHER. (END OPT)

OF THE REGION'S FIFTY-FIVE MILLION INHABITANTS, TWENTY PERCENT ARE BLACK. ONE SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE POLITICAL PICTURE IN THE SOUTH THIS YEAR IS THE INCREASED NUMBER OF REGISTERED BLACK VOTERS -- A FIGURE THAT IS EXPECTED TO EXCEED FOUR MILLION BY ELECTION DAY. ONE OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS IS JOHN LEWIS, A ONE-TIME CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST AND A COLLEAGUE OF THE LATE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JUNIOR. MISTER LEWIS IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE VOTER EDUCATION PROJECT IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, A NON-PARTISAN ORGANIZATION THAT HAS BEEN CONDUCTING A MAJOR VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE AIMED PRIMARILY AT SOUTHERN BLACKS. WHY HAS THE DRIVE BEEN SO SUCCESSFUL?

TAPE: CUT THREE -- JOHN LEWIS

"THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF FAITH AND A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE ON THE PART OF BLACKS IN THE SOUTH IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. I THINK THE GREAT MAJORITY OF BLACK SOUTHERNERS SEE THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS AS AN EXTENSION OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT. THERE'S A GREAT DEAL OF HOPE AND FAITH ON THE PART OF BLACKS IN THE SOUTH IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM -- PERHAPS MORE THAN ON THE PART OF BLACKS OUTSIDE THE SOUTH."

VOICE:

MOST SOUTHERN BLACKS ARE EXPECTED TO VOTE FOR JIMMY CARTER -- A FACT THAT MANY OBSERVERS FIND PERPLEXING. A FEW YEARS AGO IT WOULD HAVE BEEN UNHEARD OF FOR BLACKS IN ANY NUMBERS TO SUPPORT A FORMER WHITE SOUTHERN GOVERNOR. JOHN COX, A PROMINENT BLACK CIVIC LEADER IN ATLANTA WHO'S BEEN CAMPAIGNING HARD FOR MISTER CARTER, THROUGHOUT MUCH OF THE UNITED STATES, HAS AN EXPLANATION OF THE CHANGE.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- JOHN COX

"I THINK THAT ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAPPENED IS THAT THE RECORD THAT JIMMY CARTER HAD WHILE HE WAS GOVERNOR HAS DRAWN MANY BLACKS TO HIM. SECONDLY, HE HAS A PROPENSITY FOR BEING FAIR, FOR UNDERSTANDING AND TRYING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF LITTLE PEOPLE, POOR PEOPLE, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE OR BECAUSE OF THEIR AGE. THIS KIND OF SENSITIVITY, THIS KIND OF ACTION ON THE PART OF JIMMY HAS HAD A CONTAGION AMONG BLACK PEOPLE AND THEY HAVE BEGUN TO SUPPORT HIM AND FLOCK TO HIM."

VOICE:

THE LARGEST STATE OFFICIALLY CLASSED AS SOUTHERN IS TEXAS -- A STATE THAT MANY SAY SHOULD MORE PROPERLY BE DESCRIBED AS SOUTHWESTERN. BUT BEING OFFICIALLY SOUTHERN, DOES THIS MEAN THAT TEXANS IDENTIFY WITH THE SOUTH AND FEEL AN AFFINITY WITH JIMMY CARTER AS ANOTHER SOUTHERNER? I PUT THE QUESTION TO A MAN WHO KNOWS THE STATE, WELL -- EVERETT COLLIER, EDITOR OF THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE:

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- EVERETT COLLIER

"A LARGE SEGMENT OF TEXANS DO IDENTIFY WITH THE SOUTH. HOWEVER, THEY DO N O T IDENTIFY WITH GOVERNOR CARTER AS BEING ONE OF THEM. THEY DO NOT -- FOR ONE, THEY FEEL THAT THEY DO N O T KNOW HIM -- THEY DO N O T KNOW WHAT HE STANDS FOR. THEY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT GOVERNOR REAGAN STOOD FOR. THEY'RE UNDECIDED ABOUT GOVERNOR CARTER THE FACT THAT HE IS FROM THE OLD SOUTH -- THE STATE OF GEORGIA, I DO N O T BELIEVE THAT HAS MUCH EFFECT IN TEXAS."

VOICE:

AND NEWSPAPER EDITOR COLLIER THINKS PRESIDENT FORD WILL WIN THE PRESIDENTIAL VOTE IN TEXAS.

POLITICAL OBSERVERS ALSO WILL HAVE THEIR EYES ON OTHER SOUTHERN STATES AND ON CONTESTS OTHER THAN THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE. BUT MOST PEOPLE WILL BE WATCHING THE PRESIDENTIAL RESULTS, ANXIOUS TO SEE HOW JIMMY CARTER DOES IN HIS OWN POLITICAL BACKYARD.

GH/RCS